2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 10

CHILDREN

LEPCHAS are patrilineal and, in common with most of the people of India who trace descent from the father, live under what is known as the joint-family system. Under this system the family remains more or less intact, since it is only the girls who leave their parental home on marriage. There are occasions, of course, when brothers decide to separate, but, generally speaking, the land remains undivided and is worked by the members of the family as a whole.

"A child born into a community divided into clans," notes Rivers,* "becomes a member of a domestic group other than the family in the strict sense; and this is reflected in the terms of kinship that he addresses to those around him. The system of relationship found in these circumstances is called classificatory because whole groups of relatives are classed with the father, mother, brother, sister, and so forth, and receive the same terms of address. That is to say, relatives are grouped in classes. Thus, a person will give to a large number of men the term which he applies to his own father; to a large class of women he gives the same name as that he uses for his mother; and this applies even to the relationship of husband and wife. Thus, the distinctions of uncle, aunt, and cousin that play so fundamental a part in our system of relationship are largely obliterated in communities with moieties and clans."

The Lepchas use a very simple form of classificatory relationship, in which, however, the biological father and mother are clearly distinguished. It would be of no interest to the general reader to burden this account with a list of the words in use to denote the various relationships; but one

* *Social Organisation.* W. H. R. Rivers. London, 1926.

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

ALl Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./